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MSU and UM top contenders for Big Sky ski title

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MSU AND UM TOP CONTENDERS
FOR BIG SKY SKI TITLE

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MISSOULA.....

The Big Sky Ski Championships, which begin Wednesday morning at Whitefish's Big Mountain ski area, will boil down to a battle between the host University of Montana team and Montana State University's team, according to Montana coach Rusty Lyons. Lyons has coached Montana to three consecutive conference championships, but regards Montana State as a strong challenger to his hopes of a fourth straight team title.

"Weber State has a strong alpine squad, but does not have the skiers to take the title. They will score well in the slalom and downhill events and poorly in the jumping and cross country. Montana State has a strong overall team and so do we. Whoever gets the best individual performances will win," Lyons said.

Five Big Sky member-schools will field teams in the three-day meet. In addition to UM, MSU and WSC, Northern Arizona and Idaho State will be competing. Boise State was forced to withdraw Monday morning because its top two skiers cannot compete. Calvin Osborne, winner of the slalom at the Weber State Invitational two weeks ago, broke both of his legs last weekend and Craig Marantz, another fine alpine performer, has been idled by mononucleosis.

Montana has been bolstered by the addition of veteran Tom Zachary to the team. Zachary will compete in the downhill and jumping events. He placed tenth in the downhill at last year's Big Sky meet and fifth in the jumping.

Zachary's presence gives Montana a third competitor in the jumping event. Lyons has said all along that all he needed to win the conference title was another jumper. Zachary was declared eligible by a vote of ^{the} / faculty representatives of each conference school.

In an interview Monday Lyons listed the top performers in each event.

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"Montana State's John Champeny, Weber's Mark Soderquist and Montana's Bruce Tremper and Bruce Maxwell should fight it out in the slalom and Tom Wise of Northern Arizona should join them in the battle for downhill honors. The cross country race will be between Jan Brentebraten and Guttorm Froysok of Montana and Montana State's fine runners, Brian Troth, John Downey and Steve Salusso. The jumping title will be won by either Chuck Rasmussen or Allan Anderson. Rasmussen is from Montana State and Anderson is Montana's defending champion in the event," Lyons stated.

Dave Hanson, an excellent downhiller, injured an ankle last weekend and is not expected to ski as part of the Montana team. The top two teams from the meet are eligible to enter the NCAA Championships in March. The NCAA meet is to be held in Middlebury, Vermont.

The meet schedule:

Wednesday

11:00 a.m. Slalom (finals)
2:30 p.m. Downhill (first run)

Thursday

11:00 a.m. Downhill (last run)
2:00 p.m. Cross Country (finals)

Friday

12:00 p.m. Jumping (finals)

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